STATE OF COLORADO
CENTRAL COLLECTIONS

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State of Colorado Central Collection Services

Decisions

"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are."
~ Anonymous

Inside this issue:

What's New at Central Collection Services

By Greg Mechem

What a busy year it has been– sometimes you don't realize it until you look back at all the changes and wonder, "How did we accomplish all of that?"

Last year, CCS was able to add three new collectors to the Team, thanks to the legislature, bringing the total to 8 collectors. CCS also began a Night Shift in October with 4 of the collectors working 8 am to 5 pm and the other 4 collectors on second shift working 11 am to 8 pm. The collectors also began working a common portfolio of accounts, instead of each having their own individual portfolios. Mike Taylor, Dorothea Lindsey and Mickie Lawrence are still our senior collectors, while Maree Rivas, Luci Naujock, Sam Perez, and Joyce May joined the team last fall. Most recently, Robin Myers came on board just a few weeks ago.

CCS was also able to complete two different RFP's last year, one for the new "Forward" Private Collection agencies working on our behalf; Alliance One Receivables (who had been with us previously), First Revenue Assurance (who had been with us a few years ago when they were known as American Banco), and Pioneer Recovery, which is a subsidiary of Sallie Mae. The other RFP was completed for the "Legal" Private Counsel, and was again awarded to Linebarger, Goggin, Blair & Sampson (previously known as Machol & Johannes).

CCS was able to begin providing On-Line Reports to client agencies in late spring of this year. While the process did not go as smoothly as we had hoped, we were able to get everyone set up with logons and passwords and able to access all the reports. At almost the same time, the server used for the on-line Forms for New Account Worksheets, Cancels & Adjustments and Pay Directs, went down and had to be replaced, so the logons and passwords for those were changed as well. We will have the other On-Line reports available in the near future, as Victor describes later in his reporting article.

Another new change over the year has been the implementation of telephone Hunt Groups, our dedicated Customer Service Line 303-866-6581 (FOR CLIENTS ONLY) goes first to Tonia, then goes to all the Admin Staff and even to the collectors to ensure clients are able to reach someone when they call. We also created a Tax Offset Hunt Group that staff log into to take the Tax Offset calls during the busy seasons. The Collector Hunt Group was created so that debtors would be able to reach a collector more easily since they are now working a common portfolio instead of individual desks.

On Dec 1st of 2007, CCS began adding the commission fee to all accounts assigned. This change has allowed all originating agencies to receive all of the principal amount assigned, instead of having the commission deducted, also, now all debtors are treated equally in paying the commission amount.

One of our most significant challenges last year was the retirement of Penny Adkins. Victor Abad was able to step in and take over the System Administrator responsibilities. Victor has an extensive background in Computer Systems so was a natural choice, however, with such a complex system, a relatively short training period and different accommodations for different clients, it was a struggle to provide the service and reports to all of you. Please know we appreciate your patience with us during that transition.

With the recent IT consolidation, we had to reallocate the System Administrator positions in order to retain the position in our unit, and hence were not able to back-fill his position during that period. Obviously, the Customer Service position is one of the most important in the unit.

We were finally able to bring in our new Customer Service Liaison, Tonia Mosley, who came to us from Metropolitan State College of Denver. Tonia has done a wonderful job since her arrival in handling client issues, contacting many of our clients and providing the level of support that our clients need. You can reach Tonia on the dedicated Client Customer

Service Phone Hunt Group at 303-866-6581.

Cheryl DePriest was originally hired as our Receptionist and moved up to the Cancel and Adjustment position when that became vacant. Last Fall, when Abi Gaskins, the Administrative Supervisor moved over to the Department of Regulatory Agencies, Cheryl was promoted to the Administrative Supervisor role and has since done an outstanding job of organizing and supporting the Admin Team. Jessie Rodriguez, Forward Liaison, and Theresa Stephens, Posting Administrator, remain as the foundation of support on the Admin side. Jessie now carries the title of reigning historian to the unit.

Our Accountant, Barbara Jacobs, also joined the team last year, most recently from Health Care Policy & Finance. Michelle Whistler originally joined the team last year as the Receptionist. When Cheryl was promoted to the Admin Supervisor Position, Michelle was promoted to the Cancel and Adjustment Administrator. Marsha McKereghan was then hired as the Receptionist.

As you can see, we have had a lot of personnel changes over the year, with 11 out of 20 positions either being hired into the unit or changing positions within the unit. We also updated our Training Program to a modular approach, allowing us to provide generalized as well as specific training for each position. With the addition of so many new folks, it's been an exciting time with new perspectives and renewed energy. The change in the Department's culture, the philosophies of "Be Nice-Have Fun" and "Good Government Starts Here" has had a positive effect as well.

As we assimilate these new additions into our unit, as well as the many changes, we look forward to providing better service and increased capabilities for our clients.

Challenge

"Don't ask for a light load, but rather ask for a strong back." ~ Anonymous

CCS Online Reports

By Victor Abad

With all of the new changes that have happened here at Central Collections, the one I am most excited about is our changes to our website. CCS wants to make our website more functional and informative and these changes will help our clients with reports, submitting accounts and getting debtor account information.

As you all know In April 2008, CCS changed the way that our clients receive monthly reports. CCS now publishes all reports online. This change was made from the old way of sending them through unsecured e-mail. Publishing online also allows our clients to retrieve reports as needed. As some of our clients know, CCS has been working on this change for a couple of years As with any change there were delays because of server and security issues. CCS has worked hard to clear up these issues; we have our account database on a dedicated secure server located at the OIT Computer Center.

If any agency has not setup a username and password, please contact our Client Liaison, Tonia Mosley, at 303.866.6581. When you do have that username and password you can then retrieve your reports from the website. Another change for our clients is the way to submit new accounts, pay directs and adjustments online. This change is not as dramatic as the reports change, you still will have to access the worksheets from our CCS website. The main change is that agencies will need to use the appropriate client code as the username and password for the website. When submitting a worksheet clients will now see prompts to let them know if the session has timed out, this will let users know that a worksheet was not submitted correctly. There will also be a verification page that will be displayed after submittals are finished for the agencies records.

One of our client's biggest ongoing issues/requests is being able to get immediate access to status and current balance information on debtor accounts, such as when they have debtors in the office requesting holds lifted. CCS is currently in the process of testing an account query screen, which will allow our clients to access debtor account information. This database will be updated nightly and will give our clients another tool to clear up debtor accounts. The query screen will be available in early August.

There will also be more added to our website that will help CCS help our clients. As always, any comments, suggestions or ideas are appreciated. More importantly I would like to thank you all for your patience while all of the changes are happening.

The link to our website is www.colorado.gov/dpa/dfp/ccs

Vendor Offset

By Michelle Whistler

In February of 2008, Central Collection Services re-implemented the Vendor Offset Program. This program intercepts any funds payable by the State of Colorado to a debtor. Central Collections will only intercept the amounts due our clients including interest and fees. Any balance remaining will still be issued to the debtor. Our system is automated to view the accounts on a nightly basis to keep the balances as up to date as possible.

The debtor will receive a letter to the address on file for the vendor payment, notifying them of the intent to offset the Vendor funds. The debtor will have 30 days to satisfy the debt before an actual offset will occur. After the 30 day period, Central Collections will begin to take any funds due the debtor until the debt(s) are satisfied. At the time of interception, the debtor will receive another letter of notification that the funds have been intercepted.

The Vendor Offset Program matches the Debtor with Vendor disbursements by using taxpayer ID numbers. This is also how we match Tax Offset. Please keep in mind, when sending over accounts, that these programs and other skip tracing tools, including reporting to credit bureaus, are only possible when we have correct Tax Payer ID's/ Social Security Numbers. If you have any questions regarding this program, please feel free to contact us.

Effort
"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe." ~ Anonymous

CCS Procedures for Bad Checks & Statute revisions
By Tonia Mosley

CCS Procedures for Bad Checks:

Bad checks are sent to CCS either on-line or manually. If they are sent to CCS because of an Account Closed or Non-sufficient Funds status, and are over the $50 threshold criteria, they will be sent to our contract attorneys, Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson for processing through the legal system.

This includes Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions, which are electronic payments that are cleared through a financial institution by an electronic funds transfer system.

Due to legal requirements, any Bad Checks, including ACH transfers, that are sent to CCS and have been determined to be Stop Payment or Refer to Maker will not go through the legal process. Instead, they will be collected as a regular CCS account. Checks that are out of state will be collected as an in-house account.

Bad Checks and ACH transfers that are determined to be Lost or Stolen will be returned to the client as, due to fraud, they are not legally considered valid debts.

Statute Changes:

Due to Colorado Revised Statute 13-21-109, there have been some changes regarding the recovery of damages for checks, drafts, or orders not paid upon presentment when goods have already been received.

Per Colorado Revised Statute, the party who issued the payment is liable to the holder of such check, draft, or order for the following amounts,

"a) The face amount of the check, draft, or order plus actual damages determined in accordance with the provisions of the 'Uniform Commercial Code', title 4, C.R.S.; or
(b) An amount equal to the face amount of the check, draft, or order and:
(I) The amount of any reasonable posted or contractual charge not exceeding twenty dollars."

Except where your statute includes a contractual NSF fee/charge. If this is the case, the NSF fee/contractual charge is set by the institution and can exceed twenty dollars. The contractual fee must be communicated with CCS to assure accurate placement of the debt. If a NSF fee is not pre-determined and communicated when the account is placed with CCS, a $20 fee will be added to the account per Colorado Revised Statute. No NSF fee can be charged unless contractual or posted per the Colorado Statute 13-21-109.

<u>Please be sure to post your NSF fees in a place visible to your customers</u>

Social Security Numbers as Account and Reference Numbers
By Tonia Mosley

As times change and advance, so do criminals. It wasn't long ago that people used their social security numbers and gave them to others without even a second thought. That is no longer the case. Social security numbers have become the identity thief's most powerful tool.

As a result, the business world has been making a shift away from the once common use of social security numbers as account numbers or reference numbers. Many of our clients have already begun this transition. For those of you who haven't, we encourage you to begin.

Some of our reports include the reference number for client use in identifying accounts. In addition, e-mail correspondence from clients list the reference number, which further increases the risks of information security if the reference number is actually the persons' social security number. Our intention is not to force change within our client's practices, but rather to protect the integrity of the information on behalf of both the client as well as the debtor.

Let us not forget, however, that assigning an account to CCS and providing a social security number is one of the most powerful tools for successful collection. Without that important piece of information, Tax Offset cannot occur and many of our skip tracing tools cannot be used to their full capabilities. When assigning an account to CCS, please provide all crucial information such as the social security number, birth date, address, telephone number and driver's license number if available. It is also helpful to provide a description of the debt to CCS in the memo field (i.e. Fall Semester 2005, Benefit Beginning April 2006, etc.). (Please keep in mind that there is a 30 character limit for the description of debt field). This is a tremendous help to our collectors when explaining a debt to the debtor, which speeds the collection process and reduces the quantity of backup requests by the debtors. Together, we can adapt and continue to be successful in our collection endeavors while being conscious of protecting information.

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Partners in Debt Management!

Mission Statement

Working as a team, Central Collections Services (CCS) will exceed client expectations by collecting money in a prompt and cost effective method, while providing superior customer service.

WWW.COLORADO.GOV/DPA/DFP/CCS

Change
"Change does not change tradition. It strengthens it. Change is a challenge and an opportunity; not a threat."
- Prince Phillip of England

CCS Denver Regional Conference

We are pleased to announce that we will be holding the CCS Denver Regional Conference on September 12th at the Tivoli, room 640, located at 900 Auraria Parkway, Denver, CO 80204 on the Auraria campus of Metropolitan State College of Denver, Community College of Denver and University of Colorado Denver. Registration will be from 8:00-8:30 am, with a continental breakfast to be served from 8:30-9:00am. There will be a catered lunch in the afternoon, and will run until approximately 4:-00pm. Please RSVP by emailing Tonia Mosley at Tonia.Mosley@state.co.us by Friday, August 22nd. Parking is available in the main Tivoli lot on Auraria Parkway and 9th Street. Take a ticket from the parking attendants and we will have parking vouchers available during registration. Both the Light Rail and Bus Service pick up and drop off nearby to the Auraria Campus.

We are welcoming suggestions for topics of discussion for the content of the conference. Our goal is to address and educate our clients on issues most critical and relative to your daily needs. Please send any suggestions or requests for covered topics to Tonia Mosley at Tonia.Mosley@state.co.us as soon as possible as we are in the process of finalizing the agenda.

For our clients that are not in the Denver Metro area, we will be planning future conferences to be held in the Western and Southern Regions, and possibly in the Northern Region if interest present.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Client Manual Updates

By Tonia Mosley

A New Staff Contact List has been created and is available on the CCS website.
The website homepage is http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/dfp/ccs. The Client Manual Update is under the Forms and Reports tab. If you have any questions please contact me at tonia.mosley@state.co.us or 303-866-6552.

New Staff!

By Greg Mechem

We have two brand new members on our CCS team!! First is Tonia Mosley . She is our new Customer Service Liaison, she joins our team with over 10 years of Customer Service experience, most recently with Metro State College of Denver. She holds a BA in both Psychology and Spanish, with an emphasis in Medicine. Tonia is married and has a 3 year old daughter named Grace. In her spare time, Tonia enjoys skiing, hiking, camping, fishing, and playing softball. Tonia can be reached at 303-866-6552.

Robin Myers, the newest member to join the Collections Team holds a BS in Business along with a Series 6 license and has over 10 years of customer service, financial and collections experience. Robin is most proud of her 3 adult sons. In her spare time, Robin enjoys spending time with family and friends along with reading, comedy, bowling, traveling and staying active. Robin can be reached at 303-866-4490.

Please join us in welcoming Tonia and Robin to the CCS family!